

More Than Conquerors

by

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Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church U. S. A.



This message was delivered by Dr. Moffett at the evening service of the First Presbyterian Church, Vineland, N. J., on November 29, 1953. It has been reprinted with his permission by the Board of Deacons. Additional copies may be secured by contacting the church office, the pastor or a member of the Board.

May I say first that it is a very real privilege to be meeting with you tonight—a privilege to have a share in your 90th Anniversary, and a very particular privilege to be back with your pastor for this brief class reunion. But I think the greatest privilege of all is just to be here. I never cease to give God thanks, after the strife and the turmoil and the tension of the years behind the curtain, for the beauty of the music and the quiet of the sanctuary on a Sunday when people can come together freely to worship God.

I wish it were possible for me this evening simply to congratulate you on your good work during the last ninety years, or failing that, I wish it were possible to comfort and encourage you about the world situation that faces the church. I wish I could tell you that, thanks to your faithful endeavor through almost a century, the faith is now secure and the frontiers are safe. It would be so satisfying to come back from the foreign field and tell you in the home church stories about great victories won for the Lord Jesus Christ out on the frontier. But I haven't many stories of great victories to tell you. Where I have been it is the communists that have been winning the victories. I feel somewhat like General Stilwell. You remember how he came staggering out of the jungles after his disastrous Burma campaign, the Japanese armies hot on his heels, escaping with only a handful of survivors—and as he stumbled into safety a group of American reporters rushed up to him. They said, "General Stilwell give us an optimistic statement for the people back home." They didn't know General Stilwell. He was not called "Vinegar Joe" for nothing. Do you remember what he told those reporters? No false optimism for him. (I'll have to edit what he said, a little, for use here tonight.) He told those reporters, "I tell you we have taken a terrible beating."

I think Christian missionaries also should tell the truth when they come home. I think you can take it, and if you want the truth from me about the world situation facing the Church after your ninety years of good work I am going to have to tell you, "We have taken a terrible beating".

You can sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" if you like, but the grim truth of the matter is that today the Christian Church is retreating outnumbered and out-fought before the greatest onslaught it has suffered in 1300 years, since the days the Moslems came sweeping out of their Arabian desert, sweeping in a conquering crescent across the face of Christendom until they had slashed away and destroyed one half of the Christian Church of the seventh century. It has happened before, I see no reason why it cannot happen again. You really aren't very much better Christians than those Christians of the seventh century, and the new conquerors, not the green tide of Islam but the red tide of the hammer and sickle, are every bit as

fanatical, as contemptuous of human life and quite as spectacularly successful as those Moslem warriors of 1300 years ago.

We Christians have been trying to win the world for almost 2000 years, but in less than half the time that this Vineland Church has existed as a witnessing congregation, the communists have ripped away one-third of the world from us. In less than my own lifetime! What makes them so successful? If you will permit me one bit of over-simplification tonight I'm inclined to put it all in one sentence: the communists have succeeded and you are failing because communists believe in missions and in evangelism with greater intensity for their false faith than you do for the true faith. It's as simple as that. We saw it when they first rolled over us out there in North China.

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be taken by the communists? I remember reading an article some years ago about how a town out in the mid-west decided to act out for its people what communist occupation would mean. So the town fathers went out and hired men to act as red soldiers, and on the appointed day these men came pushing into that little town, pretending to loot the stores rob the banks and insult women. They took the mayor and the ministers out to the edge of town and pretended to shoot them. It was a pretty good imitation of a reign of red terror except for one thing—that is not how it happened. At least that is not how it happened to us when the red tide rolled over us.

We were in Peking. The communist armies under the red Napoleon, Chu Teh, were sweeping down after their conquest of Manchuria, across the rich plains of Peking, closing in for the kill on that ancient city. We had to decide whether to evacuate or to stay. Along with many other missionaries we decided to stay. We stayed partly out of curiosity—I wanted to see what those communists were like; and I stayed partly out of stubbornness—my wife and I are Scotch-Irish. But the principle reason we stayed was because we had gone to China in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ who says "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel", and no matter how many times I re-read that verse—that great missionary commission—I simply could not make it read, "Go ye into all the world, except communists held territory". So with many another we stayed to see what could be done for the gospel of Jesus Christ behind the curtain. And the curtain fell very quickly.

I had been asked to teach at a university 9 miles outside the Peking city walls. We raced to get there ahead of the communists, along roads that were packed with Nationalist troops retreating in wild disorder. A lieutenant galloped up to us, waving a pistol and shouting, "Look out, get back into the city, the communists are around the corner and they will kill you."

We moved past the burning airport which was already in communist hands, but we made it out to the safety of the university compound and we ducked into that compound with a feeling of great relief. We found people preparing for the coming of the communists. They were laying up stocks of food supplies. They were hiding valuables. I remember one good missionary who collected all the gold rings in his family and what valuables he possessed, went out that very night, which was a black night, dug a deep hole, hid his valuables, covered the hole over very carefully—then spent the next 3 months trying to find that hole again!

We were confused, we were panicky, we were frightened. The bloodthirsty conquerors of Manchuria were upon us. The next night the communists came in—but not at all in the rude, bloodthirsty way that we had imagined. It was one of the shocks of my life, the next morning, to go out of the house and discover the communists in their dirty, padded, mustard-yellow uniforms, stacking their rifles to one side and inviting our students to join them in games, children's games—playing ring-around-a-rosy and blind man's bluff. There was no fighting, no looting, no mistreatment of women. It was the best disciplined army that China had ever seen. We looked at the walls and saw notices, reading, "We guarantee freedom of religion". Communists! Another notice I was very happy to see: "Protect the property of the foreigner". People came in from the village, and said, "We have never seen soldiers like this before in our lives. They even sweep up the streets of the village for us at night".

Now before you think that perhaps my brain has been washed just a little too much, let me warn you that this approach of the communists as I saw it is far more dangerous than the approach of the communists as you imagine it. It is a missionary approach. The communists came into North China as liberators; they behaved like liberators; they called themselves liberators, because they considered themselves missionaries and communists take missions seriously.

Communist strategy is based on the proposition that a communist missionary is as important as a communist soldier. There are times when I think they see the war in which we are engaged in a much clearer perspective than the average American. The communists do not de-emphasize the military level of that war. They know how important it is and they have a strong army. But they don't delude themselves into thinking that the military level is the only level of the war. Communists have told us, "We never expect to defeat America on the field of battle, that would be foolish. But, in the next American depression we are going to conquer the world." To them the economic level is more important even than the military level. And materialists though the communists are, they are able to discern still another level of the

war, which too many Americans forget. This is the battle of ideas, the struggle for the hearts and the minds, and the souls of men. Communists know very well that though they win the war on the other two levels, if they lose the war for the minds of men, they have lost the world. Now that battle is a missionary battle, and the communists take missions seriously.

As their soldiers came in, the communist missionaries came out of hiding, and put on the greatest evangelistic campaign that I have ever seen in my life, and I have heard Billy Graham! They put on meetings that lasted from early in the morning until after midnight. They put on plays, and concerts, and operas, and movies, all loaded with the communist gospel. It was a veritable avalanche of communist evangelism. Before that avalanche, villagers and students were swept away, until one of my own students, came to me and tried to convert me to communism. "You stay with us fifty years, Dr. Moffett," he said, "and you'll see, we'll have a paradise on earth right here in China." And he believed it! But what really frightened me was not that he had been so soon converted to communism, but that he was already trying to convert me. He was already a missionary, coming to convert his unconverted professor. And I could not help but contrast this zealous young missionary convert of the communists, with some of the comfortable Christians I have known at home who would rather die than speak to others about Jesus Christ.

As this tide swept over us, we Christian missionaries began to feel lonely and defeated, and perhaps a little bitter. We began to wonder why it was that that Christian church, like the rest of the free world so often comes up with too little too late. It sent us out as soldiers, as it were, to hold a key pass against the enemy, to win China for Christ. But it sent only a little handful of missionaries to hold that country against hundreds, against thousands, against hundreds of thousands. I do not mean to minimize the Christian effort. At one time we Protestants had 8,000 missionaries in China. That's a goodly number. Even more important was the fact that there were 800,000 Protestant Christians in the Chinese church. But as I said, it is the communists who take missions seriously. They told us that they had in that one country 8,000,000 paid workers. I include in that number a good segment of the communist army, which is a missionary army. 8,000,000 paid workers in China alone! Don't ask me anymore "Why did the communists win China?" They won it because they take missions seriously.

With that iron force of 8,000,000 against our thin line of 800,000, is it any wonder that I come back to you without any happy little stories about missionary work in China? This is the kind of story I can tell you if you can take it. About a year after the communist conquest, a young Chinese Christian worker invited his young people to a summer conference.

He didn't really expect them to come. He knew that the communists had assigned a full time political worker, a missionary, to those young people. He knew that the communist youth corps had taken as its objective the conversion of every single young Christian in that community to communism. He knew the pressures which communists can bring to bear on young people in their totalitarian state. But they came to the conference and his heart was lifted up and they went through the week of the conference in the old familiar way. I don't know about your conferences, but out there our conferences closed with a night of testimony for Jesus Christ, as the young people stood up one by one to say what Jesus meant to them. They came to the last night, the night of testimony, and the young people stood up all right. They stood up one by one and renounced their faith in Jesus Christ, just as the communists had planned, leaving a young Christian worker heart-broken, almost out of his mind, at the wreckage of all his hopes and all his work. I don't have a pretty picture to paint for you about the situation over there, but I think you should know the truth.

Are we defeated, then? Are all your ninety years of good work done in vain? I would be false to my calling as a minister of Jesus Christ if I came to you out of China with a message of defeat. Don't forget God, and the power of God, and the word of God. Remember that verse in St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, the 8th chapter, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us". Perhaps I have been talking too much about the communists conquerors. They're there, and they are conquering. But by the grace of our Almighty God, there is in China today a group of God's "more than conquerors", the faithful remnant.

We don't talk about them very much. You will hear stories of failure in China, but I doubt if you will hear many stories of faithfulness for this reason: it is dangerous to talk about the "more than conquerors" behind the curtain. In one day, in the city in which we had been working, 376 people were executed before a stamping, cheering crowd of 40,000 people. That was one day, in one town, and executions went on for months. I am afraid even to wonder whether any of my Chinese Christian friends were among those who were executed. I do know that statements made in this country have been used against Christians out there within 48 hours, and I am not willing to have any carelessly quoted statement of mine used against Christians of China. So you will not hear too much about the "more than conquerors". But they are there. I cannot leave you completely discouraged. Let me tell you about a few, disguising them for their own safety

Here is one: an officer in the People's Liberation Army, the red army—but not any more. Today he is somewhere in China studying for the gospel ministry. What makes you think that communists cannot be converted?

Here is another: a woman, a very small but a very brave woman. The communists came rolling into her town, as they rolled into so many of them, as polite, disciplined liberators, promising to bring in the new 'heaven on earth'. The notices went up, "We guarantee freedom of religion". But it is only a paper promise. Before two years had passed the first enthusiasm was gone and the iron fist was beginning to be felt beneath the velvet glove. Communist officials came to this woman who was principal of a bible school. They said to her, "Of course we guarantee freedom of religion. You can go to church on Sunday. But religion is superstition and superstition and education don't mix. You must stop teaching the Bible in your school." Then the little woman stood up to face the communist conquerors. "I know you can drive me out of town," she said, "I know you can close the doors of our school. But this is a Bible school, and as long as our doors stay open, we are going to teach the Bible!" As far as I know, that woman is still teaching the Bible behind the bamboo curtain "more than conqueror through Him that loves her".

While there are faithful men and women like this in the church behind the curtain, I am not anxious about the future of the church of Jesus Christ in China. The rains may descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat against that little church, but it will stand. It will stand because it is built upon the Rock, Jesus Christ.

Frankly there are times when I am more concerned about the church right here in America. What about your foundations? Life is so easy for you, and foundations may not seem important, but if the dark days should come here, as they could, where would you be standing? Would you be standing with those "more than conquerors" behind the curtain on Jesus Christ, the rock that never shakes?

You are ninety years old. Are you really standing on the rock? Then and only then will you be ready to move out again into the world to capture and to win it for Jesus Christ. But to do that, you too are going to have to learn to take missions seriously.

Let us pray.

Oh, Lord, our Heavenly Father, Thou knowest our weaknesses. How easily we are swept from side to side with every wind that blows, but Thou O Lord are strong, Thy grace is sufficient for us, Thy strength can be made manifest even through our weakness therefore O Lord come into our hearts, take us, weak as we are, transform us by the grace of Jesus Christ into Thy tools and Thy instruments for the winning of the world through Jesus Christ. Amen.

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

11

There are times when the world Christian mission of the Church of Jesus Christ looks like a race. And sometimes we Christians look like we are losing the race.

I was born in Iowa - but when I went back to Asia as a missionary I went to China. I thought I was all prepared to win China for Christ. If God is for us who can be against us. But that was a race I lost in less than a year. I went out in 1947. In 1948 I was taken by the communists.

Those were bad days for missionaries

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As one Chinese Christian remarked to a recent visitor, "We are survivors. We were... bitten by the tigers, but [even the tigers] failed to grind us small enough to swallow. Its claws left scars on our faces, so we are not handsome. [But we are survivors]." (C. Lawrence, *The Church in China* 1957 p. 113.)

And another said, "We not only survived... look at us now, we grew!" (p. 121)

Room 8: 31
35-59

COLONY
SQUARE
HOTEL 

MEMBER PREFERRED HOTELS ASSOCIATION

Tribulation, Dishon
Persecution, Famine
Nakedness, Tent, Sword
No

Death, Life
Angels, Principalities
Things present, Things to come
Powers
Height, Depth
Not anything else in all creation

(2)

Are we defeated, then?

I would be false to my
calling -

Don't fret God -

the power of God, & the Word
who shall separate us?

Perhaps I've been talking too
much about conquerors.

But by grace of Almighty God
we are more than

Here's one - a very brave man
No Book.

"I know you can die

As long as there were
faithful men, like that

"The oceans came -
floods, winds

But the Church stood -

"We are beaten, we
were killed by the Tiger, but
it failed. Its claws left
scars on our faces, so we
are not heroes. But we
survived!"

And grew

May I say first that it is a very real privilege to be meeting with you tonight—a privilege to have a share in your 90th Anniversary, and a very particular privilege to be back with your pastor for this brief class reunion. But I think the greatest privilege of all is just to be here. I never cease to give God thanks, after the strife and the turmoil and the tension of the years behind the curtain, for the beauty of the music and the quiet of the sanctuary on a Sunday when people can come together freely to worship God.

I wish it were possible for me this evening simply to congratulate you on your good work during the last ninety years, or failing that, I wish it were possible to comfort and encourage you about the world situation that faces the church. I wish I could tell you that, thanks to your faithful endeavor through almost a century, the faith is now secure and the frontiers are safe. It would be so satisfying to come back from the foreign field and tell you in the home church stories about great victories won for the Lord Jesus Christ out on the frontier. But I haven't many stories of great victories to tell you. Where I have been it is the communists that have been winning the victories. I feel somewhat like General Stilwell. You remember how he came staggering out of the jungles after his disastrous Burma campaign, the Japanese armies hot on his heels, escaping with only a handful of survivors—and as he stumbled into safety a group of American reporters rushed up to him. They said, "General Stilwell give us an optimistic statement for the people back home." They didn't know General Stilwell. He was not called "Vinegar Joe" for nothing. Do you remember what he told those reporters? No false optimism for him. (I'll have to edit what he said, a little, for use here tonight.) He told those reporters, "I tell you we have taken a terrible beating."

I think Christian missionaries also should tell the truth when they come home. I think you can take it, and if you want the truth from me about the world situation facing the Church after your ninety years of good work I am going to have to tell you, "We have taken a terrible beating".

You can sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" if you like, but the grim truth of the matter is that today the Christian Church is retreating outnumbered and out-fought before the greatest onslaught it has suffered in 1300 years, since the days the Moslems came sweeping out of their Arabian desert, sweeping in a conquering crescent across the face of Christendom until they had slashed away and destroyed one half of the Christian Church of the seventh century. It has happened before, I see no reason why it cannot happen again. You really aren't very much better Christians than those Christians of the seventh century, and the new conquerors, not the green tide of Islam but the red tide of the hammer and sickle, are every bit as

fanatical, as contemptuous of human life and quite as spectacularly successful as those Moslem warriors of 1300 years ago.

We Christians have been trying to win the world for almost 2000 years, but in less than half the time that this Vineland Church has existed as a witnessing congregation, the communists have ripped away one-third of the world from us. In less than my own lifetime! What makes them so successful? If you will permit me one bit of over-simplification tonight I'm inclined to put it all in one sentence: the communists have succeeded and you are failing because communists believe in missions and in evangelism with greater intensity for their false faith than you do for the true faith. It's as simple as that. We saw it when they first rolled over us out there in North China.

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be taken by the communists? I remember reading an article some years ago about how a town out in the mid-west decided to act out for its people what communist occupation would mean. So the town fathers went out and hired men to act as red soldiers, and on the appointed day these men came pushing into that little town, pretending to loot the stores rob the banks and insult women. They took the mayor and the ministers out to the edge of town and pretended to shoot them. It was a pretty good imitation of a reign of red terror except for one thing—that is not how it happened. At least that is not how it happened to us when the red tide rolled over us.

We were in Peking. The communist armies under the red Napoleon, Chu Teh, were sweeping down after their conquest of Manchuria, across the rich plains of Peking, closing in for the kill on that ancient city. We had to decide whether to evacuate or to stay. Along with many other missionaries we decided to stay. We stayed partly out of curiosity—I wanted to see what those communists were like; and I stayed partly out of stubbornness—my wife and I are Scotch-Irish. But the principle reason we stayed was because we had gone to China in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ who says "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel", and no matter how many times I re-read that verse—that great missionary commission—I simply could not make it read, "Go ye into all the world, except communists held territory". So with many another we stayed to see what could be done for the gospel of Jesus Christ behind the curtain. And the curtain fell very quickly.

I had been asked to teach at a university 9 miles outside the Peking city walls. We raced to get there ahead of the communists, along roads that were packed with Nationalist troops retreating in wild disorder. A lieutenant galloped up to us, waving a pistol and shouting, "Look out, get back into the city, the communists are around the corner and they will kill you."

We moved past the burning airport which was already in communist hands, but we made it out to the safety of the university compound and we ducked into that compound with a feeling of great relief. We found people preparing for the coming of the communists. They were laying up stocks of food supplies. They were hiding valuables. I remember one good missionary who collected all the gold rings in his family and what valuables he possessed, went out that very night, which was a black night, dug a deep hole, hid his valuables, covered the hole over very carefully—then spent the next 3 months trying to find that hole again!

We were confused, we were panicky, we were frightened. The bloodthirsty conquerors of Manchuria were upon us. The next night the communists came in—but not at all in the rude, bloodthirsty way that we had imagined. It was one of the shocks of my life, the next morning, to go out of the house and discover the communists in their dirty, padded, mustard-yellow uniforms, stacking their rifles to one side and inviting our students to join them in games, children's games—playing ring-around-a-rosy and blind man's bluff. There was no fighting, no looting, no mistreatment of women. It was the best disciplined army that China had ever seen. We looked at the walls and saw notices, reading, "We guarantee freedom of religion". Communists! Another notice I was very happy to see: "Protect the property of the foreigner". People came in from the village, and said, "We have never seen soldiers like this before in our lives. They even sweep up the streets of the village for us at night".

Now before you think that perhaps my brain has been washed just a little too much, let me warn you that this approach of the communists as I saw it is far more dangerous than the approach of the communists as you imagine it. It is a missionary approach. The communists came into North China as liberators; they behaved like liberators; they called themselves liberators, because they considered themselves missionaries and communists take missions seriously.

Communist strategy is based on the proposition that a communist missionary is as important as a communist soldier. There are times when I think they see the war in which we are engaged in a much clearer perspective than the average American. The communists do not de-emphasize the military level of that war. They know how important it is and they have a strong army. But they don't delude themselves into thinking that the military level is the only level of the war. Communists have told us, "We never expect to defeat America on the field of battle, that would be foolish. But, in the next American depression we are going to conquer the world." To them the economic level is more important even than the military level. And materialists though the communists are, they are able to discern still another level of the

war, which too many Americans forget. This is the battle of ideas, the struggle for the hearts and the minds, and the souls of men. Communists know very well that though they win the war on the other two levels, if they lose the war for the minds of men, they have lost the world. Now that battle is a missionary battle, and the communists take missions seriously.

As their soldiers came in, the communist missionaries came out of hiding, and put on the greatest evangelistic campaign that I have ever seen in my life, and I have heard Billy Graham! They put on meetings that lasted from early in the morning until after midnight. They put on plays, and concerts, and operas, and movies, all loaded with the communist gospel. It was a veritable avalanche of communist evangelism. Before that avalanche, villagers and students were swept away, until one of my own students, came to me and tried to convert me to communism. "You stay with us fifty years, Dr. Moffett," he said, "and you'll see, we'll have a paradise on earth right here in China." And he believed it! But what really frightened me was not that he had been so soon converted to communism, but that he was already trying to convert me. He was already a missionary, coming to convert his unconverted professor. And I could not help but contrast this zealous young missionary convert of the communists, with some of the comfortable Christians I have known at home who would rather die than speak to others about Jesus Christ.

As this tide swept over us, we Christian missionaries began to feel lonely and defeated, and perhaps a little bitter. We began to wonder why it was that that Christian church, like the rest of the free world so often comes up with too little too late. It sent us out as soldiers, as it were, to hold a key pass against the enemy, to win China for Christ. But it sent only a little handful of missionaries to hold that country against hundreds, against thousands, against hundreds of thousands. I do not mean to minimize the Christian effort. At one time we Protestants had 8,000 missionaries in China. That's a goodly number. Even more important was the fact that there were 800,000 Protestant Christians in the Chinese church. But as I said, it is the communists who take missions seriously. They told us that they had in that one country 8,000,000 paid workers. I include in that number a good segment of the communist army, which is a missionary army. 8,000,000 paid workers in China alone! Don't ask me anymore "Why did the communists win China?" They won it because they take missions seriously.

With that iron force of 8,000,000 against our thin line of 800,000, is it any wonder that I come back to you without any happy little stories about missionary work in China? This is the kind of story I can tell you if you can take it. About a year after the communist conquest, a young Chinese Christian worker invited his young people to a summer conference.

He didn't really expect them to come. He knew that the communists had assigned a full time political worker, a missionary, to those young people. He knew that the communist youth corps had taken as its objective the conversion of every single young Christian in that community to communism. He knew the pressures which communists can bring to bear on young people in their totalitarian state. But they came to the conference and his heart was lifted up and they went through the week of the conference in the old familiar way. I don't know about your conferences, but out there our conferences closed with a night of testimony for Jesus Christ, as the young people stood up one by one to say what Jesus meant to them. They came to the last night, the night of testimony, and the young people stood up all right. They stood up one by one and renounced their faith in Jesus Christ, just as the communists had planned, leaving a young Christian worker heart-broken, almost out of his mind, at the wreckage of all his hopes and all his work. I don't have a pretty picture to paint for you about the situation over there, but I think you should know the truth.

Are we defeated, then? Are all your ninety years of good work done in vain? I would be false to my calling as a minister of Jesus Christ if I came to you out of China with a message of defeat. Don't forget God, and the power of God, and the word of God. Remember that verse in St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, the 8th chapter, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us". Perhaps I have been talking too much about the communists conquerors. They're there, and they are conquering. But by the grace of our Almighty God, there is in China today a group of God's "more than conquerors", the faithful remnant.

We don't talk about them very much. You will hear stories of failure in China, but I doubt if you will hear many stories of faithfulness for this reason: it is dangerous to talk about the "more than conquerors" behind the curtain. In one day, in the city in which we had been working, 376 people were executed before a stamping, cheering crowd of 40,000 people. That was one day, in one town, and executions went on for months. I am afraid even to wonder whether any of my Chinese Christian friends were among those who were executed. I do know that statements made in this country have been used against Christians out there within 48 hours, and I am not willing to have any carelessly quoted statement of mine used against Christians of China. So you will not hear too much about the "more than conquerors". But they are there. I cannot leave you completely discouraged. Let me tell you about a few, disguising them for their own safety

Here is one: an officer in the People's Liberation Army, the red army—but not any more. Today he is somewhere in China studying for the gospel ministry. What makes you think that communists cannot be converted?

Here is another: a woman, a very small but a very brave woman. The communists came rolling into her town, as they rolled into so many of them, as polite, disciplined liberators, promising to bring in the new 'heaven on earth'. The notices went up, "We guarantee freedom of religion". But it is only a paper promise. Before two years had passed the first enthusiasm was gone and the iron fist was beginning to be felt beneath the velvet glove. Communists officials came to this woman who was principal of a bible school. They said to her, "Of course we guarantee freedom of religion. You can go to church on Sunday. But religion is superstition and superstition and education don't mix. You must stop teaching the Bible in your school." Then the little woman stood up to face the communist conquerors. "I know you can drive me out of town," she said, "I know you can close the doors of our school. But this is a Bible school, and as long as our doors stay open, we are going to teach the Bible!" As far as I know, that woman is still teaching the Bible behind the bamboo curtain "more than conqueror through Him that loves her".

While there are faithful men and women like this in the church behind the curtain, I am not anxious about the future of the church of Jesus Christ in China. The rains may descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat against that little church, but it will stand. It will stand because it is built upon the Rock, Jesus Christ.

Frankly there are times when I am more concerned about the church right here in America. What about your foundations? Life is so easy for you, and foundations may not seem important, but if the dark days should come here, as they could, where would you be standing? Would you be standing with those "more than conquerors" behind the curtain on Jesus Christ, the rock that never shakes?

You are ninety years old. Are you really standing on the rock? Then and only then will you be ready to move out again into the world to capture and to win it for Jesus Christ. But to do that, you too are going to have to learn to take missions seriously.

Let us pray.

Oh, Lord, our Heavenly Father, Thou knowest our weaknesses. How easily we are swept from side to side with every wind that blows, but Thou O Lord are strong, Thy grace is sufficient for us, Thy strength can be made manifest even through our weakness therefore O Lord come into our hearts, take us, weak as we are, transform us by the grace of Jesus Christ into Thy tools and Thy instruments for the winning of the world through Jesus Christ. Amen.

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You may be wondering by now whether I learned anything but a balancing act out of the history of missions in China, and my own small part in it. Didn't I learn anything more specific from that last

But there is one more lesson I learned from missionary failures in China — perhaps the most important lesson of all. It is this:

What looks like failure to the church, and to its missions, may not be, in God's eyes, failure at all!

When I left China in 1951 after a short, uncomfortable visit to a

Chinese jail prison, I was convinced that we missionaries had completely

fouled. At one point we had 9,000 ^{Protestant} missionaries in China. Now as I

left there were only a handful or two left — and most of them had left by the

end of the year. A few exceptions — the last Presbyterian mission to leave communist

China lasted until 1957. But we were soon all gone — and I think

most of us thought that somehow we had fouled.

But I was still obsessed with my own failure.

Not long after we returned to this country, all of us who had lived under the communists for a time were debriefed, and

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But I was still obsessed with my own failure. Not long after I had returned to this country, all of who had lived under the communists for any length of time were debranded, as it were and ~~were~~ asked to think about our experience, our failure (of ~~we wanted~~ to call it that), and to write in order of priority the most important lessons in mission which we thought we had learned.

Someone took all our responses, and collated them - more than a hundred replies, and many more hundreds of answers - and here are the 5 or ten most mentioned reasons ^{out of more than 50 in what we called our Protestant failure} for ~~Protestant failure in~~ in China:

- x ① Much talk about self-support, but not enough action in that direction.
- x ② Social work (principally educational + medical) outstripped the development & nurture of the Chinese church.
- ③ Too much foreign-owned and foreign-controlled property
- ④ Too little effort by the church to help farmers + factory workers
- ⑤ Too many missionaries had inadequate understanding of Chinese language + culture
- ⑥ Too many missionaries kept control too long.
- ⑦ The church remained too western
- x ⑧ Not enough Christian literature of real worth.
- x ⑨ Too much emphasis on organization, not enough on the spiritual life
- x ⑩ Too much use of money, not enough emphasis on preaching the gospel.